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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

REPORT ON A SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMES FOR LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT IN THE AFRICAN REGION

Executive Summary

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1. Directly or indirectly, livestock resources play an important role in all strata of traditional and contemporary African societies and economies. In particular, animal products rather than cereals and roots and tubers are the main source of dietary energy supply for the population living in the areas most seriously affected by drought and desertification. Also, they are assuming an increasing importance in the diet of high-income and urban consumers.

2. The livestock population (cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs, horses and chickens) of the continent, estimated at about 222 million tropical livestock units in 1985, grew at an annual average rate of 1.3 per cent over the last decade. The overall increase in total indigenous meat production of 3 per cent over the last decade, although keeping pace with that of human population, was insufficient to offset the impacts of rising income.

3. Despite the existence of great potentials at both production and demand levels, the efforts at development of the sector over the last three decades or so were not commensurate to the magnitude of the livestock problems and its potential. Indeed, on average less than 50 US cents were committed by and through African Governments per livestock unit per year over the last three decades. Therefore, Africa became increasingly dependent on the outside world to meet, not only its requirements for animal agricultural inputs, but also the demand for meat and dairy products of its rising human population. Over the period 1975-1984, the livestock products trade deficit grew at an average annual rate of 16 per cent, reaching nearly $US 2.1 billion in 1984 for 45 countries. Moreover, Africa was a net exporter of meat in 1975 but is a net importer of the same product today.

4. What are the basic reasons behind the poor performance of the livestock sector? A critical analysis of the sector reveals that policy inadequacies were at the heart of its disappointing performance. Indeed, governmental interventions tended to hamper the self-reliant, self-help and independent capability of "traditional" producers and merchants while these have often acted as braking forces to the smooth implementation of livestock projects, policies, laws and regulations. Consequently, the sector could not develop from its inner strengths and African Governments were forced to depend on outside the producers' community, the nation and the region to implement their livestock development strategies.

5. Since the share of African Governments in the total commitment of financial resources to the sector was less than one fifth, it was almost impossible to direct development at priority areas and therefore to sustain production. In particular, it was impossible to effectively implement the strategy by which governments made themselves wholly responsible for the basic investments and the "free" supply of inputs and supporting services, especially in the pastoral areas. In recent years, it became evident that only a handful of countries can afford the high cost of such strategy. There are even indications following the decrease in interest of the international community that many governments have increasingly found it difficult to maintain and fully operate the existing infrastructures and equipments and to use fully the already available trained manpower because of lack of financial resources.

6. Also, African Governments have emphasized national self-reliance and self-sufficiency in a sector where co-operation among producing countries and between them and deficit countries is imperative for sustained development. Indeed, because livestock production is characterized by the movement of both animals and their owners across national boundaries and of the existence of drought, ticks, tse tse flies and diseases which do not know political boundaries, livestock development efforts in one country may affect or be affected by what is done in adjacent countries or by the attitude of neighbouring governments.

7. Despite the adoption by all African Governments of the Lagos lan of Action in 1980, they failed to translate into concrete actions by ways of policy decisions and resources allocation, the principles of increased measures of collective self-reliance to help achieve greater individual and collective self-sufficiency in the production and supply of livestock inputs and outputs. Indeed, the effects of drought on the livestock sector are more pronounced in the 1980s than they were in the 1970s, and since 1980, Africa is crippled by rinderpest, the most devastating cattle disease. Also, while excess supply of slaughter animals and inputs exists in some countries, others import from outside the continent to meet their demand.

8. Clearly, there is a need to think over the whole approach to livestock development in Africa. This has been recognized by the ECA Conference of Ministers when adopting resolution 463 (XVIII) in 1983 calling upon the ECA secretariat to conduct, in close collaboration with FAO, perspective studies on livestock, evaluate progress, and formulate a specific approach to the development of this sector aimed at increasing its contribution to food and agriculture development. In response, a report on "Comprehensive policies and programmes for livestock development in Africa" was prepared and presented to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers. As a follow-up to this study, resolution 548 (XX), calling upon ECA to assist in harmonizing livestock development policies in Africa, was adopted. The present study, which is mandated by the ECA work programme for the biennium 1986-1987, is an integral part of the implementation of resolution 548 (XX).

9. Africa is currently faced with two choices. The first one is a continuation of the present trends in livestock development in the continent, i.e., over-reliance on outside world to finance the sector; minimal participation of so-called immediate beneficiaries to their own development; supply of basic inputs and supporting services by the public sector without a charge to users and without an appropriate code of their use; and weak subregional and regional co-operation at both production and trade levels.

10. The second choice is that of facing resolutely the constraints impeding livestock development through the evolution or revision of policies, strategies and programmes and implementing them in order to:

(a) Mobilize the resources, particularly relevant knowledge, experience, know-how to strengthen the self-help, self-reliant and independent capability of producers especially pastoralists, merchants, butchers, as well as veterinarians and other suppliers of inputs and services not forgetting the consumers of output from the livestock sector;

(b) Make efficient uses of animal and range resources throughout the continent;

(c) Create the appropriate framework for African countries to intensify collective efforts for greater self-reliance and self-sustained progress and development of the African livestock sector.

11. There is no doubt, especially following the adoption of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 (APPER) by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in July 1985, that the choice is on the second one. It could not be otherwise without facing a deterioration in the per capita consumption of animal products and an increased negative contribution of the sector to the overall trade deficit of about $US 5 billion in 1990 and $US 23 billion by the year 2000 when the African Common Market and the African Economic Community are expected to become operational respectively.

12. The ECA secretariat pledged, on its part, to assist African planners in furthering their capability for public policy research and in developing subregional and regional co-operation in the livestock sector through:

(a) A continuous evaluation and monitoring of the performance of the livestock sector on the basis of the region, the economic groupings and/or the ECA subregional groupings for Africa (MULPOCs) and for a period not less than five years;

(b) Identification of possible areas for harmonization and co-ordination of policies and actions for optimal exploitation of both supply and demand potentials of major livestock products, by products and inputs within a subreigon and the region;

(c) Identification of joint investment opportunities within the subregion or the region between the private and/or public organizations in production and trade of major selected livestock inputs, services, products and by-products;

(d) Playing a catalytic role for the effective implementation of the identified policies, actions and joint investment programmes for the development of the African animal agriculture, especially through meetings of high-level officials concerned with livestock research and development and of the policy organs of ECA and MULPOCs.

13. The focus of the present study is on the first two parts mentioned above. First, an overview of livestock development over the last three decades is given, including an evaluation of the performance of African Governments to mobilize financial resources and of the livestock sector in terms of production, trade and consumption of livestock products and by-products. Secondly, lesson were drawn from past experience. Attention was drawn to some inconsistencies affecting the sector and to the Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC) which call for reflection on the part of policy analysts and decision-makers. Finally, recommendations were made directed towards more individual, national and collective self-reliance without denying the role of the international community to complement effectively Africa's own efforts at livestock development.

14. More specifically, it was recommended:

(a) To develop at both national and subregional levels an effective public livestock policy research with the aim of evaluating the impacts of policy options on the performance of the animal agriculture and thereby to help design optimum strategies and appropriate institutions to accomplish the desired goals;

(b) To create the basis for progressive and self-sustained development in the sector through making the operators, especially the producers, responsible for the development and management of the basic resources (water and pasture land) and enabling the producers to control the flows and quality of services and inputs.

(c) To consider individual land tenure and to encourage the formation of legalized small groups of producers who would have exclusive rights of use over a specific piece of land;

(d) As far as livestock inputs and services are concerned, it was proposed:

(i) To charge the total or partial cost of the livestock inputs and services to enable the producer to control their flow, especially their quality;

(ii) To promote the production and distribution of vaccines and drugs by the private sector; and

(iii) To promote private curative medicine and to sub-contract, whenever appropriate, preventive medicine to the private sector;

(e) To direct efforts at subregional level towards ensuring an optimal contribution of the sector to the realization of the African Common Market as called for in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) through:

(i) The harmonization of policies related to production, marketing, pricing and trade of major livestock inputs, products and by-products;

(ii) The promotion and strengthening of subregional co-operation in the production and distribution of major vaccines and drugs;

(iii) The promotion and strengthening of subregional co-operation in the control and eradication of major animal diseases;

(f) To redirect the assistance of the international community towards the availability of financial resources at highly concessional terms, developing and maintaining appropriate trade arrangements and enabling Africa to achieve greater self-sufficiency in basic research;

(g) To prepare a policy paper on the eradication of rinderpest in Africa based on two scenarios: Scenario 1 in which the programme would be financed mainly through the generous assistance of the international community; while in scenario 2 the programme would be financed essentially by producers, governments and African financial and development institutions.